The other private Indian companies engaged in exploration or mining of coal and lignite for captive consumption for production of iron and steel and production of cement are allowed foreign equity up to 74%.

(b) and (c) Fresh investment from private sector in coal mining will only add to the employment opportunities. Work systems would be governed under the relevant statutes.

Coal blocks allotted to private parties

†1118. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of the coal blocks in the country handed over to private sector by Government for exploration under captive mining and when they were handed over to private sector;

(b) the number, out of those coal blocks where the production has started indicating the quantity thereof being produced;

(c) whether Government are also importing coal;

(d) if so, the quantity of coal imported during each of the last two years;

(e) the efforts Government have made to increase exploration of coal in the country itself rather than to import the same; and

(f) the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO): (a) and (b) Under the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973, as amended in 1993, companies in the private sector can do captive mining of coal for power generation, iron and steel production and cement production. No prospecting license is granted in favour of a private company for exploration, unless the private company has been allocated a coal block for captive mining. 3 coal blocks were given to private companies where further exploration was carried out by them. Out of those blocks production has started in 1 block. 2,965 million tonnes of coal has been produced from this block in the year 2004-05.

(c) No, Sir.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(d) The quantity of coal imported during last two years is given below:

(in Million tonnes)

Year	Coking coal	Non-coking coal	Coke
2003-04	12.992	8.691	1.894
2004-05 (Prov.)	14.835	10.465	2.782
TOTAL	27.827	19.156	4.676

(e) and (f) Geological Survey of India (GSI), under Ministry of Mines, is carrying out regional exploration of all the minerals, including coal, on a routine basis. To supplment the efforts of GSI, Ministry of Coal is sponsoring a scheme of Promotional (regional) Exploration in Coal & Lignite in the Tenth Plan. Ministry of Coal is also sponsoring another scheme on detailed drilling in Non-CIL blocks in the Tenth Plan to take up the detailed exploration of areas where CIL have no production programme.

Adoption of latest technology for coal exploration

1119. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that our exploration of coal technique and strategy differs from the larger coal producing countries;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) what steps have been taken to adopt the latest technology in the field of coal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO): (a) and (b) The techniques and strategies adopted in India compare favourably with international practices and best suited for geological nature of Indian coalfields.

(c) There is a need for upgrading the equipment from time to time depending upon the need and the efficiency, which is being addressed regularly. As reported by Coal India Limited, recently two high-tech Geophysical instruments for Borehole Logging have been imported. Two deep capacity drills are expected by September, 2005 for taking up exploration of deep-seated coal seams. Better softwares/equipments for geological modeling, web enabling and coal bed methane assessment in coal are also under process of procurement within the Tenth Plan Period.